

# Wireless Local Number Portability

## FCC Consumer Facts

### Background

For years, consumers with wireline phones have been able to switch from one local carrier to another while at the same location without having to change their phone numbers. Now, this service will be available to wireless phone customers as well.

Under the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) wireless "local number portability" (LNP) rules, you can switch wireless carriers within the same geographic area and keep your existing phone number. Note, however, that if you are moving from one geographic area to another, you may not be able to port the number. In addition to switching from one wireless carrier to another, in most cases, you will be able to switch from a wireline carrier to a wireless carrier, or from a wireless carrier to a wireline carrier and still keep your phone number.

### Timeline for Wireless LNP

On **November 24, 2003**, wireless carriers in the **top 100 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)** must implement this customer option. MSAs are geographic designations of population centers compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau (see attached map of the top 100 MSAs).

### Implementing Wireless LNP Outside the Top 100 MSAs

**Outside of the top 100 MSAs**, wireless carriers must be capable of implementing wireless LNP no later than six months after **November 24, 2003**.

Wireline to wireless portability should generally occur on the same schedule. Consumers should check with a prospective new carrier to confirm their options.

### Initiating the Process

If you want to change carriers:

- Do not terminate your service with your existing carrier **before** initiating service with the prospective new carrier.
- Contact the prospective new carrier, who will start the process of porting by contacting your current carrier.
- You may request service from a new carrier at any time.
- Be aware that you are obligated to pay any early **termination fees** that you may have under your existing contract and any outstanding balance owed to your old carrier. Review your existing contract to determine what fees or charges apply. However, once you request service from the new carrier, your old carrier may not refuse to port your number, even if you owe money for an outstanding balance or termination fee.

### Fees and Charges

- The FCC does not regulate the rates of wireless service providers because the wireless industry is very competitive. In most areas, consumers have many service provider and plan options available. Competition brings the lowest prices for consumers.

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- Carriers are allowed to charge a fee to recover their “porting” costs. Carriers may or may not choose to charge a fee, and their fees may vary. If they do charge specific fees, the fees cannot exceed their porting costs.
- Even if carriers decide to charge for wireless LNP, they may not refuse to port a number because a consumer has not paid a porting fee.
- Additionally, some carriers may choose to pay the old carrier’s costs of porting for the benefit of their new customers. **Ask your new carrier** whether it has a policy of paying or reimbursing these charges.

### The Adjustment Period

Your new carrier can usually give you a good idea about how long the process will take. In general:

- For a **wireless-to-wireless** transfer, your phone number should work within a few hours of your request to change wireless providers.
- A **wireline-to-wireless** transfer may take several business days to complete. **Ask your new carrier** whether you will be able to continue using your current wireline number during the transfer process.
- If you port from a **wireline phone to a wireless phone**, your wireline long distance carrier **will not** move with you. Your long distance service will generally be provided by your new wireless carrier, but you should verify this with the wireless carrier before changing service providers.

*Note:* For wireline-to-wireless porting, there may be a period of “mixed service” when you essentially have two telephones with the same number during the adjustment period.

### Emergency Services

In some areas, 911 operators automatically receive the phone number or location of a wireless call, but in many areas, that is not the case. Technology that will provide that information – Enhanced 911 or “E911” – is currently being implemented, but is not yet available using many wireless phones and in most parts of the country.

As noted above, during the porting process from the old carrier to the new carrier, there may be a period of “mixed service” - when you may have two telephones with the same number. During this time period, your E911 service may be affected: the call should go through, but, the 911 operator may not be able to call you back if the call gets disconnected. For this reason, before porting either a wireless or a wireline number, **ask the new carrier** how long the porting process will take and how the porting process will affect a call to 911 services.

### Handsets and Special Services

In some instances, wireless **handsets** among different wireless service providers are incompatible. If you switch wireless service providers, you may need to purchase a new phone, even if you retain the same phone number. If you have concerns about purchasing a new phone **ask your new carrier** whether or not your current phone will work with that carrier’s network.

Also, be aware that in a few areas, as you roam, consumers with ported numbers may only be able to send and receive calls; other services, such as caller ID, may not function properly.

For additional information on wireless LNP, contact the FCC’s Consumer Center toll-free at:

1-888-CALL-FCC (1-888-225-5322) voice,  
1-888-TELL-FCC (1-888-835-5322) TTY, or  
visit our Web site at

[www.fcc.gov/cgb/NumberPortability/](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/NumberPortability/). This factsheet may be updated to reflect future developments; we encourage you to check the web site for updates.



### The 100 Largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)\*

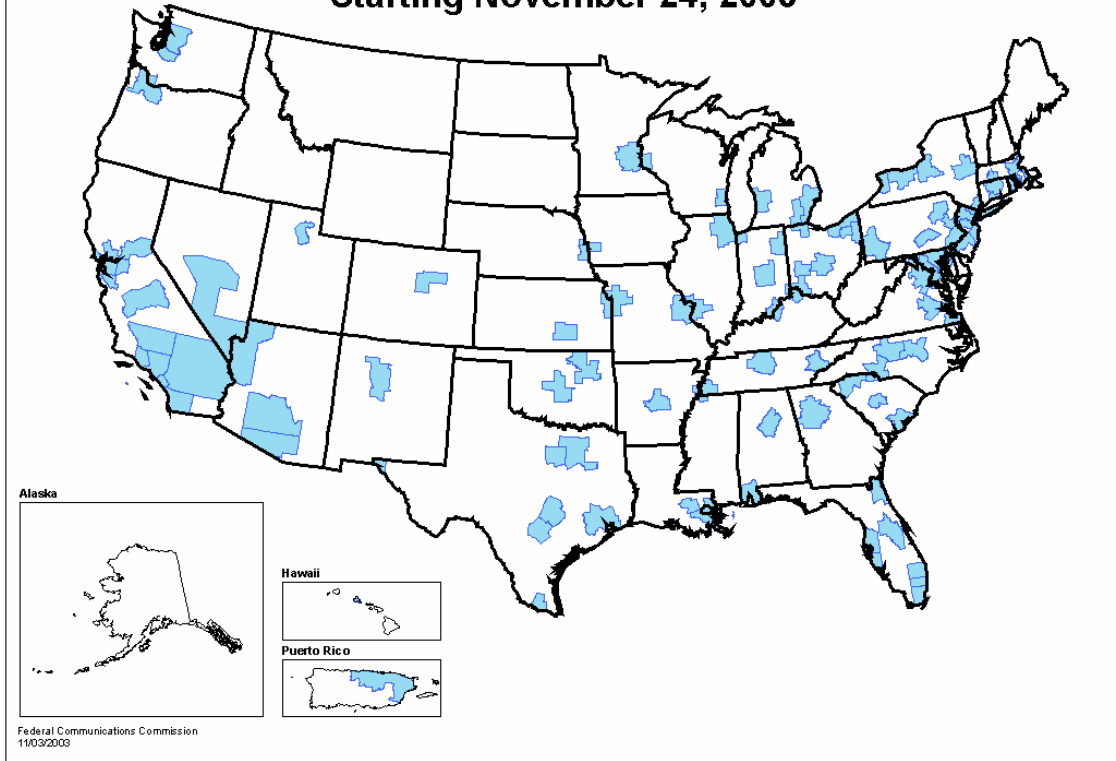
1. Los Angeles—Long Beach, CA	51. Raleigh—Durham—Chapel Hill, NC
2. New York, NY	52. Hartford, CT
3. Chicago, IL PMSA	53. Buffalo—Niagara Falls, NY
4. Philadelphia, PA—NJ	54. Middlesex—Somerset—Huntdon, NJ
5. Washington, DC—MD—VA—WV	55. Memphis, TN—AR—MS
6. Detroit, MI	56. West Palm Beach—Boca Raton, FL
7. Houston, TX	57. Monmouth—Ocean, NJ
8. Atlanta, GA	58. Jacksonville, FL
9. Dallas, TX	59. Rochester, NY
10. Boston, MA—NH	60. Grand Rapids—Muskegon—Holland, MI
11. Riverside—San Bernardino, CA	61. Oklahoma City, OK
12. Phoenix—Mesa, AZ	62. Louisville, KY—IN
13. Minneapolis—St. Paul, MN—WI	63. Richmond—Petersburg, VA
14. Orange County, CA	64. Greenville—Spartanburg—Anderson, SC
15. San Diego, CA	65. Dayton—Springfield, OH
16. Nassau—Suffolk, NY	66. Fresno, CA
17. St. Louis, MO—IL	67. Birmingham, AL
18. Baltimore, MD	68. Honolulu, HI
19. Seattle—Bellevue—Everett, WA	69. Albany—Schenectady—Troy, NY
20. Tampa—St. Petersburg—Clearwater, FL	70. Tucson, AZ
21. Oakland, CA	71. Tulsa, OK
22. Pittsburgh, PA	72. Ventura, CA
23. Miami, FL	73. Syracuse, NY
24. Cleveland—Lorain—Elyria, OH	74. Omaha, NE—IA
25. Denver, CO	75. Albuquerque, NM
26. Newark, NJ	76. Tacoma, WA
27. San Juan—Bayamon, PR	77. Akron, OH
28. Portland—Vancouver, OR—WA	78. Knoxville, TN
29. Kansas City, MO—KS	79. El Paso, TX
30. San Francisco, CA	80. Bakersfield, CA
31. Fort Worth—Arlington, TX	81. Allentown—Bethlehem—Easton, PA
32. San Jose, CA	82. Gary, IN
33. Cincinnati, OH—KY—IN	83. Harrisburg—Lebanon—Carlisle, PA
34. Orlando, FL	84. Scranton—Wilkes-Barre—Hazleton, PA
35. Sacramento, CA	85. Toledo, OH
36. Fort Lauderdale, FL	86. Jersey City, NJ
37. Indianapolis, IN	87. Baton Rouge, LA
38. San Antonio, TX	88. Youngstown—Warren, OH
39. Norfolk—Virginia Beach—Newport News, VA—NC	89. Springfield, MA
40. Las Vegas, NV—AZ	90. Sarasota—Bradenton, FL
41. Columbus, OH 1,540,157	91. Wilmington—Newark, DE—MD
42. Milwaukee—Waukesha, WI	92. Little Rock—North Little Rock, AR
43. Charlotte—Gastonia—Rock Hill, NC—SC	93. Ann Arbor, MI
44. Bergen—Passaic, NJ	94. McAllen—Edinburg—Mission, TX
45. New Orleans, LA	95. Stockton—Lodi, CA
46. Salt Lake City—Ogden, UT	96. Charleston—North Charleston, SC
47. Greensboro—Winston-Salem—High Point, NC	97. Wichita, KS
48. Austin—San Marcos, TX	98. New Haven—Meriden, CT
49. Nashville, TN	99. Mobile, AL
50. Providence—Fall River—Warwick, RI—MA	100. Columbia, SC

\* This MSA list represents the 100 largest MSAs based on U.S. Census data from 1990 to 2000. Additional MSAs may be added based on subsequent Census updates.

47 C.F.R. 52.21(a).



## MSAs Where Wireless LNP Will Be Available Starting November 24, 2003



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